

The Cheerful Letter

Every place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of Good.—James Freeman Clarke.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE 1934-1935

It is the privilege of the secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to present her annual report for 1934-1935. During this time she has endeavored to perform all duties incident to her office.

Mrs. Harry A. Stevens, the chairman, presided at the annual meeting and at the eight regular monthly meetings, held at 25 Beacon Street, Boston. Her happy faculty for making these meetings real conferences was responsible for the large attendance of workers, who came to share their successes and problems with each other. Despite the fact that the weather man rarely smiled on the first Friday of the month the average attendance was fifty, the average number of Branches represented was thirty-three, and fifty-three Branches were represented one or more times. The presence of the president, the secretary and several directors of the General Alliance at certain meetings gave proof of their personal interest in the work of the Exchange.

The Exchange was saddened by the death of Mrs. William B. Nichols, a past chairman and loyal worker, who despite failing health was active in its behalf until the end. Along with their deep sense of loss all members have a feeling of gratitude for the experience of having known and worked with her. The Exchange was honored to be able to place the name of Mrs. Nichols "in memoriam" with the General Alliance. The name of Mrs. Charles F. Russell, *Cheerful Letter* chairman for King's Chapel Branch, whose death occurred during the past year, is also held in grateful memory.

The annual reports of the chairmen of the standing committees give much food

for thought, as they record faithful work done in many Branches. Mrs. Henry R. Bowser, chairman of the Library Committee, describes in detail its activities. Your secretary has tried to select some salient points from many. This year a check-up of all established libraries has been made. Two hundred letters were sent to places about which recent information was lacking. Of one hundred fifty replies, so far received, only thirteen were returned from the dead letter office. Mrs. Bowser states, "The majority of these replies have been satisfactory, showing that the people still have most of the books, which have been of real benefit to the communities. Some of these worth-while libraries, which had been side-tracked, have been placed on the active list. Where replies were unappreciative, a note has been made of this fact and such people will receive no more books."

Later she writes, "There has been no spectacular achievement this year but the work has gone on, slowly but surely, building up our old libraries and adding new ones,—the best from a great number of applications. Never before have so many libraries—one hundred and nine—been taken care of in one year. We have twenty-seven new libraries,—next to our largest number. Forty-three of the one hundred nine are in schools. Best of all, forty-five different Branches have participated in the work. These statistics show a healthy condition with a great many people sending small amounts to many places. No cause less vital could have weathered the last five years, as has the Cheerful Letter Exchange."

The story of the community libraries

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25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass

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at Boston, Mass.

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is a fascinating one. They vary from the type of the Litchfield Memorial Library in Alberta, which has developed into a town library, for which books are purchased from the proceeds of small entertainments but which still appreciates help now and then, to that of one in an isolated mountain town in the South. The custodian of this latter writes, "I am loaning the books to about forty families and if an average of four persons read out of each family, this would make about one hundred sixty regular takers of books. Some people come from five to ten miles." A woman in North Carolina writes, "I am very careful with the books I have, keep a record of all I loan and instruct folks to take care of those they borrow. I would have even *more* readers otherwise, for a *few* do not care to borrow if you require them to take good care of the books."

In speaking of the school libraries Mrs. Bowser comments, "Our resources are taxed by consolidated schools which are eager to be placed on the State list. To become accredited a minimum of five hundred books is necessary for a school of not more than one hundred pupils. The *Cheerful Letter* has put many schools on this list." Here follow extracts from the letter of a teacher in a Georgia consolidated school, "The name *Cheerful Letter* is a magic one to me. The books sent us have been a miscellaneous collection, but not one has been out of place or useless. You have done a beautiful, needed, telling service that cannot be evaluated in words. We still need *books* and *books*. We need most a first class Webster's Unabridged Dic-

tionary." Mrs. Bowser quotes from the letter of a teacher in a remote mountain school: "The books are being used every day. Education is making progress, but as yet half the boys and girls past school age have not attended school more than two or three years. Due to an unenforced attendance law there are still three children out of school for every one in school. Many girls and boys are reared, become heads of their own families and live their lives without leaving the immediate environment into which they were born. Recently I took my basket ball team to the county seat to see a game and I learned that this was the first trip for many of these boys to go that far from home. In short, these shut-ins will have to travel through books alone."

Your secretary is constrained to ask you if you are not thankful for the sending of every book, when it has gone to serve such a purpose? This year forty-five Branches sent 6,096 books, an increase of 1,500 over last year, besides two sets of encyclopedias, three pulpit Bibles, 3,581 magazines, and many miscellaneous items. This material sent by forty-five Branches has gone to libraries in nineteen States, two provinces of Canada, and Labrador. North Carolina received the most books, with Georgia, Virginia, Arkansas, Alberta and Nova Scotia following. Of the forty-five committees sharing in the work, All Souls' of New York took the lead in number of books given, with Wellesley Hills, Lexington, Community Church of New York, Watertown, Montclair, New Jersey, and Jamestown, New York, following.

If your Branch is not able or anxious to do much *Cheerful Letter* work, your secretary suggests that you collect a few books from its members to send to an established library. Mrs. Bowser's report has told you something of what their influence will be.

Mrs. Charles P. Dillaby, chairman of the Home Study Committee, in her annual report announces that twenty-five pupils are seriously studying under the direction of eighteen teachers. Nine are

studying English, three each drawing and music, two German and one each French, Greek, chemistry, journalism, English history, Bible history, home economics, bookkeeping and shorthand. Of the eighteen teachers, fifteen are continuing from last year. They live in Keene, Charlestown and Alstead Center, New Hampshire; Montpelier, Vermont; Hartford, Connecticut; New Jersey; Marietta, Ohio, and the following Massachusetts communities: Boston, Jamaica Plain, Lexington, Quincy and Taunton. Books for the work have been given through the Branches of Providence First Congregational in Rhode Island, and Salem First, Somerville and Concord, Massachusetts. Twenty-seven requests from mothers for text books and dictionaries to supplement school work have been answered. Twenty dictionaries and other books were sent in answer to the offer in the November magazine.

Your secretary quotes from Mrs. Dilaby's report: "During the year we have kept in touch with pupils and teachers and found good progress being made. We are in need of more volunteer teachers, especially to teach written English. This work is definite and not ambitious enough to need to discourage anyone wishing to help. Most applicants for our help are worthy. One enthusiast in acknowledging a dictionary replied, 'I received the dictionary this evening. I read it nearly every day,' no doubt wishing to impress us with its usefulness."

The personnel of students changes from time to time. Some drop by the wayside. Others marry. One young man studying Latin went away to High School after telling how much he had been helped. To your secretary, teaching an underprivileged young person at a distance seems a very real opportunity for many an Alliance woman.

During the past year Mrs. John A. McCaddin, chairman of the Department of Correspondents and Appeals, because of pressing home affairs was obliged to resign her office. Mrs. Laura M. Hurst has taken her place. She reports that it is "a joy and an inspiration to find such

businesslike order as was left by the past chairman, who had worked untiringly to inaugurate a dependable system for this department. It is impossible to estimate the number of letters this department receives during the year but it might be interesting to know that during the holiday season it is quite usual to receive twenty-five in one mail. In the past year 231 appeals were published in the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. Letter after letter has been received telling of the shut-in's gratitude for this service and the wonderful pen friendships which have been formed.

"One hundred names have been assigned to forty-four Branches. There is a chance for chairmen to secure more workers because there is a long waiting list of correspondents. Forty-nine requests for quilt scraps have been given out by Mrs. Bucek at regular meetings. The department hopes before another year closes to see many new *Cheerful Letter* Committees listed in the Manual. We have approximately 1,125 regular correspondents on our regular list."

The above report tersely states the record of many hours of faithful service. Less spectacular than the work of the library or the home study department, it is just as truly an integral part of the activities of the Exchange. Without it you would cease to function.

Mrs. Stevens, chairman of the Exchange, in her annual report mentions the fact that she gives her attention to "unclassified projects going forward in the name of the *Cheerful Letter* Exchange together with oversight and counsel in regular activities." She rejoices that Utica Industrial Institute is to receive benefit from a fund of the A. U. A. and that it was her privilege to have been the one who introduced Professor Holtzclaw to Dr. Patterson, as the president of one of the schools the *Cheerful Letter* had long helped. She reports that the Virginia student, kept at Blue Ridge Mission School through the generosity of workers, will graduate this year. The student nurse in training as a result of

CORRESPONDENTS AND APPEALS

Letters should be addressed to Mrs. Laura M. Hurst, 78 Penfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

Persons writing to the Department for the first time should always give as reference the name and address of their minister.

When a correspondent moves to a new address, notice should be sent to Headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., and to those persons who have been sending letters and reading matter.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of its magazine by addressing letters asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who disobeys this rule will be dropped from the list, and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by the Central Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to the Chairman of this Department.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

APPEALS

1. My little girl is 9 years old and has been paralyzed in her right arm and shoulder since she was 16 months old. Because her lungs were weak, the doctors advised us to take her to the mountains, which we did, and her health has improved wonderfully. The roads are very bad and there are no churches nor towns near us so we get lonesome. We would appreciate reading, embroidery thread, or scraps for making doll clothes. Mrs. J. C. Russell, Dabney, Ark.
2. Mrs. Hannah Miller, Rockyhill, Ark., is 68 years old and can hardly walk because of rheumatism. Her husband is 76 and has palsy very badly. They would be glad to receive puzzles, pictures, and sewing.
3. I wish to thank the one that sends me the *Cheerful Letter*. For the past year I have been left in the old home sick and alone. My parents and sister have passed on to their eternal home. I would be grateful for any kind of cheer such as embroidery materials, and reading. Miss Pattie Jefferson, Stuart, Va.
4. Mrs. Glyn Emerson, Rupert, Ark., lives on a farm in an isolated, hilly country. She would like very much to receive any kind of sewing for herself, and Bible stories for her husband, also scrap books or used cards for her little boys.
5. I am old and can't get out much and I would like some good reading matter, embroidery thread, scrap books or cards. Mrs. W. H. Terry, Spencer, Va.
6. Miss June Sheets, Brandon, N. C., is 11 years of age and lives with her grandparents. She goes to school when she can as it is a long way off and the road is rough and rocky. She likes books, cards, and embroidery or crocheting. She is trying to learn to do fancy work.
7. I should appreciate some writing paper, good reading matter, or sewing materials. Mrs. Ella Gilliland, Rt. 2, Box 43, Tolar, Tex.
8. Mrs. Ruth Riley, 10th St. Ext., Rt. 2, Box 34, Roanoke, Va., writes that she is kept in the house a great deal with her two small children and would enjoy books, post cards, and crayons.

9. My dear old father died last January and we sure do miss him. We would be real glad to get magazines, jig-saw puzzles, and knitting materials. Mrs. Edna Smith, Rupert, Ark.
10. Mrs. Max Babsy, Wine and Garnet Sts., Gainesville, Tex., was left with three small children. She is trying to keep two of the children in school. Any kind of fancy work, school materials, or reading would be helpful.

ATTENTION—CHEERFUL LETTER CHAIRMEN

Chairmen or workers desiring regular correspondents should write to Department H, *Cheerful Letter* Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Please do not select regular correspondents from the Appeals or add names other than those given out at Headquarters. Any information regarding correspondents or appeals should be addressed to this Department.

REPORT OF SECRETARY

Forward from page 15

Dr. Hobart's interest has had her work interrupted by an appendix operation but she writes, "I hope I may repay you by being a nurse that you will be proud of."

She further states that "for obvious reasons no definite report on Bibles can be given, but that four large pulpit Bibles, many Testaments for children's use and about fifty new Bibles are known to her to have been sent."

She describes a constructive piece of work thus, "A letter appealing for support of our magazine was mailed in March to every chairman of *Cheerful Letter* listed in the *Manual*. Nothing of the kind has ever been done before. It seemed to me that all should share in this enterprise, not just you faithful chairmen who come to regular meetings and hear finances discussed."

A conscientious chairman of a standing committee is usually modest in recounting her own endeavors and Mrs. Stevens is no exception.

The response to Mrs. Stevens' letters has been encouraging. The record number of seventy-five Branches contributed to the support of the magazine. Do you wonder that Miss Edith L. Jones, your *sunshine collector*, beams? Again All Souls, New York, leads, with Wellesley Hills; Dorchester First; King's Chapel, Boston; Montclair, New Jersey, and Roxbury following in the order given.

No one can measure the influence of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*, which is your official organ. As your secretary has frequently reiterated no worker should be without it. She is aghast to note how few of you chairmen indicate on their questionnaires that you take it. She hopes that for some reason many of you ignored that question. Its features should be familiar to you. Praise of it comes from all quarters. The chairman for San José, California, writes, "I think the little magazine is wonderful and I read it through as soon as it comes." A correspondent of the Plymouth committee has enjoyed it for forty years. More and more of its readers cannot afford to pay even its modest subscription rate and doubly appreciate its being sent to them free of charge, since their ability to purchase reading matter has decreased. There are two ways in which people may help here. They may pay for one or more subscriptions to be sent to those on the waiting list or they may take and circulate sunshine bags. These bags collect many pennies, which go to defray the expense of printing and mailing the magazine. Why do you not give some of the inactive members of your Branch an opportunity to ally themselves actively with Alliance work through the magazine?

Recently your secretary read what purported to have been the creed of Ulysses, favorite hero of Greek mythology. She states it with the certainty that many of you *Cheerful Letter* workers and your correspondents have really adopted it, although you may never have heard it, "To sail beyond the sunset till I die; to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield." It is such indomitable purpose,

such restless energy searching beyond the narrow confines of ordinary experience that drives you forward. It is spirit similar to that which carried Ulysses across many seas, which gives one of your workers, who is a resident in a New Hampshire home for the aged, courage to write letters to distant places, to collect reading matter and quilt scraps from her friends to send far away or to distribute to the less fortunate in her own city, to sponsor a card party in the home to raise money for her work and to close her annual report with the statement, "I shall try to do better next year."

One thing for which your secretary *strives, seeks, which she has not yet found but about which she does not yield*, is an annual report from every Cheerful Letter chairman listed in the *Manual*. To make this easy of accomplishment early in April she sent out questionnaires to 215 chairmen, so listed. It was with high hopes that she mailed them but with a sinking heart that she counted the final returns to find only 154 ready to tabulate. Where are the other 61? Reports are missing from some Branches which your secretary knows have done much excellent work. She suspects that some other chairmen feel their accomplishments so small that they hesitate to record them. To the latter she would commend the consideration of this comment by the chairman for the Somerville Branch, whose work, by the way, is not at all meagre: "There is no question as to the value of Cheerful Letter work, though what *one* does seems very small. The accumulation of small bits certainly does much." If each one of the Branches not reporting has averaged to send away one book and nothing more, the aggregate has been sufficient to make worth while donations to three of your established libraries. So please resolve to report your activities, however small, next time. If you were a procrastinator this year, do resolve to be prompt next time.

Your secretary regrets that time and strength do not permit her personally to acknowledge the fine reports which have come to her from faithful chairmen, and

takes this opportunity to thank them for their co-operation.

In tabulating the reports given on the questionnaires your secretary is always at a loss to give honor where honor is due. Some chairmen are methodical and count every article sent; others speak lavishly of *innumerable* pictures. How is your secretary to judge whether 2,274 used stamps represent more or less than 136 packages of clippings or whether 540 articles sent at Christmas are the equivalent of forty-seven boxes? At any rate there is no doubt that Mrs. Brush, the tireless chairman for All Souls' Church, New York City, again leads in the total number of articles sent with an aggregate of 55,961 items to her credit. Your secretary quotes these figures because they seem to her the measure of notable achievement. The membership of this Branch is only one hundred twenty-five; people are scattered and harder to reach in a big city than in a smaller place; they are not all wealthy by any means. Mrs. Brush in her report to the chairman of your Library Department wrote in part, "Here is my report. Do we work? We do! Let no one tell you that our money comes easily; not a bit more easily than the small sums that some Alliances use. It is a case of hustle and talk and beg and—beg. But since that is the job to be done, done it must be." Like Ulysses Mrs. Brush is always *sailing beyond the sunset, striving, seeking and finding*.

The following Branches deserve honorable mention for the volume of work done, although no one of them anywhere nearly approaches the output of All Souls': Providence First Congregational and Newport, Rhode Island; Montclair, New Jersey; Hingham, Brookline First, Boston First and Lexington.

Years ago Emily Dickinson wrote the following appreciation of reading:

"There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry.

This traverse may the poorest take
Without oppress of toll;

How frugal is the chariot
That bears a human soul."

No one of you can begin to enumerate the number of times, when tired, lonely or discouraged, you have picked up a favorite book or magazine, have lost yourself in it as truly as if you had been sailing with Ulysses, and have returned from its pages refreshed, renewed and heartened. Did you ever think of the many women in the world, who live beyond the reach of any sort of public library, whose homes are bare of reading matter save a possible mail order catalogue, which a Kansas correspondent writes is called a "wishing book" in her neighborhood, and whose means are so limited that they do not allow for the purchase of even so *frugal a chariot* as a weekly paper? Think of your children and those of your neighbors placed in such a home and resolve to be responsible for the sending of at least ten readable books and twice as many magazines to a similar one next year. Your secretary likes to imagine what the result would be, if every Alliance member would do just this. She cannot begin to estimate the influence exerted by the 2,679 books and 31,065 magazines, which were distributed by *Cheerful Letter* workers to individuals and institutions, not classified as libraries, this year. Including the contributions to libraries, she can report the gratifying total of 8,775 books and 34,646 magazines placed in the hands of people yearning for reading during the past twelve months.

Three correspondents shall in their own words tell you what reading matter means to them. One, whose home is in Saskatchewan, writes thus to the chairman for the Branch of Hackensack, New Jersey: "I don't know if it was kind of you to send *The Readers' Digest* just now! I'm so busy and how could I resist one peep inside, then how could I stop reading? I do enjoy *The Digest*." Another, whose home is in Arkansas, writes in this wise to the chairman for the Fourth Unitarian Church of Brooklyn, N. Y.: "I'm not so young as I used to be. I'll be forty-one in February; I have

quite a lot of chores to do, also do my own milking and all the work for my family of three small children and a little orphan girl, besides my husband and his eighty-five-year-old father. Our railroad town is forty-two miles away by highway. So you see I do not often get there and besides I never have but very little money when I do go. I am very thankful to anyone who sends us reading or books." The last writes from Virginia to the chairman for the First Parish in Portland, Maine, as follows: "I should have known nothing outside my small world without your letters, and all the books, magazines and newspapers you have sent me through the years." Here is a record of the launching of many *frigates*.

Your secretary wishes to emphasize that those of you who have distributed books and magazines in your own communities to shut-ins and those who because of straitened circumstances can no longer afford to buy them, or to homes and institutions, are just as truly doing *Cheerful Letter* work as those who send them further afield.

When it comes to the sending of cards to correspondents your secretary is certain that the number quoted is far too small. Included in it are hundreds reported by some Branches and single ones reported by others. At Christmas time 70,530 suitable ones were sent, which added to those sent during the rest of the year make the astonishing record of 91,605 in all. Included in this total and swelling it to 94,964 may well be the 3,359 pictures, which correspondents have received. Most of these were large, colored ones and many found their way to the walls of homes and school rooms. The smaller pictures were often reported not by number but as *rolls, envelopes or large packages full*. Was it worth while to collect and renovate these cards and to mount many of these pictures and to send them away? Some of your correspondents shall answer. The chairman for the Church of the Saviour, Brooklyn, New York, received this acknowledgment from a North Carolina teacher: "Let me

assure you that the package of cards brought joy to the hearts of fifty-six little boys and girls, many of whom had never seen a Christmas card before. Some of them were the prettiest the rest had ever seen in the Blue Ridge Mountains. We will use some of your cards to trim our tree and some are being sent to relatives by the children. Some are so pretty they must keep them to look at." The Virginia correspondent of the chairman for the Ayer Branch writes, "My little grandchildren were pleased with the historical post cards of Plymouth and Provincetown and will take them to school, when it begins." Thus may cards serve as *frugal chariots* as well as books and your secretary advises you to *strive* and *seek* to procure cards, which she is sure you will *find* in quantity.

Sending helps to school teachers appeals to many Branches. This work has been systematized through the assistance of Miss Lottie M. Allen, who has kept a separate list of teachers on file. She has sent questionnaires to all teachers of whom the Exchange had a record. With the information thus obtained she is able to assign names to chairmen desirous of sending useful material. For instance, she supplied the names of eight teachers for a worker who had a large number of pencils to distribute. Miss Allen will provide anyone who asks with a list of suggestions as to articles wanted in most schools.

The chairman for the Branch in Bedford, Massachusetts, has *adopted* a school and a teacher and gives her reason for so doing thus: "My teacher to whom I send everything I can find to help in her school is very grateful for even a pencil. I enjoy the work and spend a great deal of time collecting material and also making scrap books for the children. I feel that through their teacher I can help more children than by sending a little here and there."

There is great variety in the helps which have gone to teachers. More or less at random I shall quote from several reports. The chairman for First Church, Boston, writes that she heard from a

teacher in the southern mountains as follows: "Such appropriate and pretty pictures are not so easily gotten and they are real treasures for me to use in my work." Another of her teacher correspondents acknowledged the receipt of empty scrap books, paste and clippings thus: "I have all the grades from first through the seventh and some of my boys and girls are the finest to be found. If you could know them, you would be glad to be helping them." What a relief the donation of *busy work* must have been to this overworked pedagogue! The chairman for Community Church, New York City, reports: "We make up packages of cards, postals and clippings and enclose scrap books, paste and brushes and have heard that the children enjoy making their own. My committee had *struck* on this as a waste of time for them." The chairman for the North Easton Branch reports sending paper for making artificial flowers and your secretary is reminded to quote from a letter from her own correspondent, who is a teacher in the Virginia mountains: "When there is death in the village, I help the children make a design of flowers and send it from the school. We make them of crepe paper and use greens from the woods. The people are too poor to buy flowers. A note recently came from a heartbroken mother thanking us for sending a spray for the grave of her darling baby."

A Texas mother wrote to the chairman for the Roxbury Branch thus: "Today came a box from you with *such* a lot of nice school things. You see I have five in school and that means five grades to buy supplies for. They started a few days ago without the proper things—now this you sent will just *fill the bill* nicely. Little Lenna Jo, a first grader, shrieked with delight, when I opened the box, 'Oh, mama, did you *ever* see so many pretty pencils? May I have one? 'Cause the one I've got at school is just a little NUB.' So you have made them happy and lifted some worry from me." Your secretary calls to your minds that many States do not provide free text books or supplies for their school children and

that such things sent to teachers help not only them but over-burdened parents as well. So do *not yield* in your quest for school materials.

The mandarin coat, skillfully made of silk scraps by the Nebraska wheel chair invalid, who is both a correspondent and an independent *Cheerful Letter* worker, has mutely borne testimony to what can be done with patchwork pieces at the last annual meeting of the Exchange, a piazza conference at the Shoals, a Monday Conference, and the meetings of eleven Branches. This year chairmen have outdone themselves by sending to correspondents 1,949 packages of scraps and 514 bundles of sewing materials, a total of 2,463 parcels, which have carried employment with useful output to enough women to inhabit several small towns. In these packages have gone patterns for patchwork quilts, crochet designs and directions for all sorts of fancy work. The correspondents, who starved for beauty, *strive* and *seek* for it, have been in some measure able to *find* it in their own creations.

Again workers have been especially generous at Christmas and have sent 1,247 boxes all over the country. It is safe to assume that these boxes carried cheer to at least 12,470 people in individual families, in schools and at community trees. The number of gifts contained therein was legion, as was their variety. Here follow some of the gifts mentioned by chairmen: toys of all kinds, jig saw puzzles, neckties, aprons, dust caps, towels, bureau scarves, table cloths, bead chains, bracelets, pins, note paper, tintex, hand bags, soap powder, old stockings for rug making, salt and sugar bags, and, especially for schools, pads of paper, pencils, crayons, paints, painting books, handkerchiefs, mittens, cakes of soap, tooth brushes, and wash cloths. Your secretary was interested to observe that not only was hard candy sent in quantity, but from Kalamazoo, Michigan, were sent packaged gelatines and puddings, to say nothing of nuts, while from Arlington Street Church, Boston, were despatched raisins, coffee and tea. To a

boy, whom the chairman for Orange, N. J., describes as musical and who "craved a breath harp," was sent a harmonica with another for his brother, this being the interpretation of the request.

Other thoughtful gifts were some rolls of wall paper sent to a correspondent of the Lexington Branch, who had been papering the walls of her cabin with pages from magazines, and a reading glass for an old man, sent by Bulfinch Place Branch. You can imagine what joy a mother who has been impelled to *strive* and *seek* for a way to make Christmas happy for her little ones and who has been unable to *find* it, feels when she knows that after all her children are to be remembered from the box sent to her or to their teacher. One wrote, "The box from you was Christmas and Santa Claus mixed together."

Not all boxes and gifts go at Christmas. The chairman for the Needham Branch reports eighteen birthday boxes sent. The pleasure they gave must have been great, for birthday remembrances are very personal things. Your secretary wishes to pause here to express her regret that the afore-mentioned chairman, Dr. Mary F. Hobart, one of your most devoted workers, has this spring resigned her office. Her influence upon her co-workers and her correspondents has been of inestimable value.

Possibly too much emphasis has been laid upon material things, for after all the original function of the Exchange and probably its most important one still is the sending of *cheerful letters* to the lonely, the isolated and the shut-in. Your secretary can make no estimate as to the number of such letters mailed but she knows that it would run into many thousands. (Think of the help you are to the Post Office Department's revenue!) The chairman for the Harriet Holden Evening Alliance of Leominster writes in this wise: "Most of our correspondents lead busy and narrow lives and sorely need the interchange of ideas more even than the gifts of little things to make their lives happier and perhaps a little easier." The chairman for the Detroit,

Michigan, Branch tells you that, "It happens that I am the only correspondent one lonely woman has and she seems to need at least one person's monthly letters." The chairman for the Branch at Fort Collins, Colorado, who has had as her correspondent for eight years a mother in North Carolina, now confined to her bed with T. B., and whose seven children need encouragement, reports thus: "I have induced several of the children to write me letters and hope my own energy will continue to keep them interested." This description of her correspondent is given by the chairman for the Brewster Branch: "I have written to Mrs. H—— of Tennessee for many years and she is very appreciative of letters. She owns her own land, unlike her neighbors, and with the help of a grandson manages to live on what it produces. She is not well and lives so far from the nearest town that she could seldom get to church. So she deeded an acre of her own land on which to build a small church, that she and her neighbors might attend 'preaching' regularly and the children have a Sunday School." There is inspiration for the *Cheerful Letter* workers in letters which come from women like the last. A correspondent of your secretary's mother writes: "Tell me some more about your pretty things. I love to know about what others have, even though I can never hope to own such things myself." Can you doubt that the letters you write are not just as potent *coursers* as Emily Dickinson's *page of prancing poetry* to carry your readers *lands away*? Through their pages your distant friends sail with *Ulysses beyond the sunset*.

Your secretary is sure that you will like to learn something of the methods of other chairmen. There are some lone workers, who carry on the work with no help from other members. These women get real satisfaction from their contacts with the distant and lonely, and give much to their correspondents. It is, however, about those who are organized in committee groups that your secretary will speak. The chairman for the Mont-

clair, New Jersey, Branch, reports: "Our committee is organized into departments and each department is in charge of a committee member, who is responsible for its work under the committee chairman. The departments include—1. Books and magazines. 2. Christmas cards. 3. Scrap books. 4. Knitting. 5. Sewing materials. 6. Home study. 7. Individual correspondents." No one can wonder that their output is great. The chairman for the Bangor, Maine, Branch states: "The work this season has been more satisfactory than ever before, due to much better co-operation. Until this year I had been working almost entirely alone. In a copy of the *Register* I read that the members of All Souls' committee in New York City met once each month to wrap and address packages. I tried this plan and it has worked very well and real interest for the first time has been awakened. We have sent out fifty-four packages." It is pleasing to note that the organization of Mrs. Brush's committee has helped another so definitely. Other well-organized committees are those of Providence First, Rhode Island, Dorchester First, West Roxbury, North Andover and Springfield, the last one of which attributes some of its success to the co-operation of other church societies.

Problems often beset faithful workers, but those who keep their eyes on the future and "sail beyond the sunset till they die" manage to solve them ultimately. It is refreshing to read in the report of the Lexington chairman, "Problems? None to solve; all clear sailing!" She is not alone in her feeling. Your secretary is not going to divulge the names of the Branches from which chairmen admit the following problems and she will try briefly to suggest solutions. One writes: "My most difficult problem is to gather enough magazines and quilt scraps to supply the demands." Your secretary suggests that in this case not enough publicity has been given to the need. Perhaps the minister of that church, like one in New York, would allow a brief request to be put into the church calendar. Remember, too, that

Cheerful Letter work is not denominational and try to enlist others. The chairman from Orange, New Jersey, reports Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian and Catholic friends helping her. If you offer to collect material to be given, you usually get a great deal. One chairman, who has no car, reports that a mother with small children, who cannot do much Alliance work, puts herself and her car at the disposal of the committee twice a month. Many chairmen report that they have difficulty in interesting others in the work. One from the middle west says, "My difficult problem lies in interesting our Alliance in a department which brings no money to the Alliance treasury. It is a matter for education and it is hoped that the coming year will give us an opportunity to present an intelligent outline of all work of all committees, which do active work in spiritual values." Possibly the example of the Beverly committee might be followed; it held a cake sale from which a considerable sum was raised and turned into the Branch treasury. Some of this was appropriated for its use and surely this action demonstrated real interest in all Alliance endeavors. Another chairman writes that she finds it difficult to make her fellow members co-operate in a work which is not local. In that case your secretary suggests that for a year that particular committee specialize mainly in local work. Near-by institutions and individual shut-ins will benefit. Some Branches like Hudson make this their policy. During such a year a little propaganda could well be spread about some appealing correspondent of the chairman. Still another worker writes, "The greatest problem, one which I have not been able to solve, is to get new members of my committee." This suggestion from the chairman for Hingham may help here, "At a special all-day meeting in the Parish House to which all Alliance members were invited, twenty-three responded and helped prepare Christmas cards and clippings, sort pictures, wrap up pieces, make valentines and scrap books. Typical letters from correspond-

ents were read. It gave an excellent opportunity to acquaint members of the Alliance with our committee work." Bridgewater had a similar meeting.

Many chairmen find the matter of raising money difficult. There is a great diversity in the amount of financial help from the Branch treasuries. Most workers pay for a good deal of postage themselves. Since the sunshine bag must be circulated for the magazine, collections at meetings are not desirable. Group activities are varied. Card parties and food sales are common. Somerville has found a "silver porch party" lucrative and delightful. The committee for Germantown, Pennsylvania, Branch had a table at the church fair and sold seeds and ivy from the gardens of its members. A goodly sum was realized and the supply exhausted. Montclair, New Jersey, sells old newspapers, the price for which "fluctuates and so papers must be stored to await good market prices." Wollaston has a committee which meets regularly. Each member drops ten cents or more into a box at each meeting.

The last big problem to face workers is the answering of begging letters from correspondents. The chairman from Gloucester writes, "I find the most difficult thing is to handle correspondents who are so poor that they seem to want things to wear more than letters or reading matter. I can't help seeing myself that letters are a poor substitute for necessities. Of course, I always wonder if they are as badly off as their letters seem." The chairman from Newton Centre reports, "Some correspondents seem to think that all they have to do is to ask and we to give. They write of clothes and other things sent by other groups. I am not keen about this side of the work and never have been." Your secretary grants that it is difficult not to be moved by appealing letters from afar. She is, however, quite certain that the plight of the writers is often by no means so black as it is painted. Such has often proved to be so, when a case has been investigated through Dr. Dexter's office. She maintains that it really

should make no difference to you whether your correspondent needs money or not. You are organized to do a certain thing. There are thousands of philanthropic agencies in the country. No one of them would ever advocate sending material help from long distances without investigation. Obey the rules of the Exchange with the surety that every time you break them, you are making it hard for someone else. Obey the rules of the Exchange with the certainty that there are numberless women hungry for the sort of cheer you can legitimately spread. If during the coming year every chairman wrote to begging correspondents that their names would be dropped the next time they asked for clothes and money and enforced her ultimatum, our lists would be freed from the few unworthy ones and their would be none of this diffi-

culty. It is just a case where you must *strive and seek to find* the right correspondents. To prove that the right correspondents are waiting for you is one of the purposes of this report.

By the end of next year your secretary hopes that each one of you will agree with the chairman for the Cleveland, Ohio, Branch, who writes, "I feel that *Cheerful Letter* work is of great value. I am so pleased that I have been asked to go on with the work for next year. I am sure that I am doing something worth all the effort I can put into it."

"To sail beyond the sunset till I die; to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" may well be the aim of each of you through all your future.

Respectfully submitted,

ETHEL LANE HERSEY,
Secretary.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

MRS. HARRY A. STEVENS, *Chairman*, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

MISS ETHEL L. HERSEY, *Secretary*, Hingham, Mass.

MISS EDITH L. JONES, *Treasurer*, 11 Dana Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Meetings at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, at 10.30 A.M. the first Friday of each month from October to May inclusive.

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, and to give to those living far from a church some of the inspiration of the printed word by the publication of one good sermon, or similar article in each issue of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. Only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed upon by all churches are printed.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To establish Circulating Libraries in isolated communities, schools, and colleges in rural and mountain districts where public libraries and other educational privileges are not available.

WHERE TO WRITE

Letters containing subscriptions to the paper, fifty cents a year, and money from the *Sunshine Bags* should be sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

Letters asking for correspondents and appeals to be printed in the Cheerful Letter Magazine should be sent to Mrs. Laura M. Hurst, 78 Penfield Street, Roslindale, Mass.

Letters asking for help in studying at home, and requests from teachers and mothers who desire educational assistance, should be sent to Mrs. Charles P. Dillaby, 60 Aldworth Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries should be sent to Mrs. Henry R. Bowser, *Chairman*, 20 Clark Road, Wellesley Hills, Mass. A circulating Library will be started in any small community that is in need of one, if proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references given.